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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AREA OZONE MEETING SCHEDULED

Local Officials Invited to July 10th Meeting

Thursday, July 3, 2003-Sen. Patricia Birkholz, Chair of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, and Steven Chester, Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, today announced an informational meeting on **Ozone Nonattainment Designation Recommendations to be held on July 10, 2003 from 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.** at Grand Valley State University Grand Rapids campus. The meeting will take place in the Eberhard Center, 2nd Floor, Room C.

“Based on current ozone air quality monitoring statistics, the major areas of concern are located in Southeast and West Michigan,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township.

States are required to submit to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) a list of recommendations for designating 8-hour ozone nonattainment areas. The EPA recently extended the deadline for states to submit recommendations to July 15, 2003.

In West Michigan, Ottawa, Allegan, Benzie, Mason, Muskegon, Berrien, and Cass counties all have recorded violations of the 8-hour ozone standard. Kent County may also be included in the nonattainment area.

The nonattainment counties are subject to more stringent air permitting requirements for major new sources of emissions that contribute to ozone pollution. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will have informational materials at the meeting.

“The implementation of the Federal Clean Air Act needs input from area citizens and leaders. We hope that local citizens and elected officials will attend the July 10 meeting to understand the impacts of nonattainment designations and help in the planning for improved air quality,” said Birkholz.